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Subject: "COTTON STOCKINGS IN PLACE OF SILK." Information from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Cotton stockings are one answer to the cry spreading over the country--

"What are we going to do when we can't get silk hose?"

"Wear cotton!" the home economists say. It happens that they have been working for two years past to improve cotton stockings both in looks and fit. Now with the supply of raw silk from Japan shut off, this cotton hosiery research furnishes at least one of the answers to the stocking problem. The Bureau of Home Economics is all ready with 150 designs for cotton stockings of different weaves and weights,-- from sheer evening hose to practical service styles. We'll soon be seeing many of them on sale. Hosiery manufacturers are very much interested,-- in fact, a number of these designs have already been released and sold in retail stores.

The original idea behind this work was to restyle cotton stockings. Make them more attractive looking. Better fitting. Filling definite needs in a woman's hosiery wardrobe, and in doing so, help use more of the country's surplus cotton. For example,--service styles for sports wear. Or for working around the house or in the garden. And sheer, lacy hose for the more frivolous hours of a woman's day.

Now the picture has suddenly changed. The present stocks of silk hose will soon be cleared from merchants' shelves. And women will still need stockings,-- a pair a month the country over. We shall have to content ourselves with other fibers. And that means chiefly cotton, for rayon and other synthetic yarns are limited by defense needs.

Right here the efforts to improve the looks of cotton hose begin to bear

fruit. For the Department stocking specialists have designed really beautiful hose to meet all the different uses women require. And as 89 percent of the silk knitting machines in hosiery mills are adapted to knitting lisle yarns, manufacturers can change over to cotton without much difficulty.

That word lisle, by the way, means cotton in this country. Lisle is smooth cotton yarn, made of high grade long staple cotton, tightly twisted. It is "gassed" to remove the fuzzy fibers seen on other cottons, and mercerized. That gives it greater strength and luster.

The new cotton stockings are full-fashioned, just as good silk hose are. That is, they are made on machines that shape them to fit the leg, with a seam up the back, slender ankle fit, and properly made feet. The soles, toes, and heels are reinforced to make them more durable.

Some of the sheer experimental stockings have been made with fine 2-ply yarns on high-gauge machines that make a great many stitches to each inch across the stocking. That gives plenty of stretch, especially at the knee and calf of the leg. Service weight stockings are usually made of 3- or 4-ply yarns. They are knit on lower-gauge machine,-- 42 to 51-gauge. Both cotton and silk stockings can be made on these machines.

Then you'll find other good features on these new types of cotton hose. Two-way stretch tops, and undyed feet for those that are allergic to stocking dyes. Some of the experimental work has been aimed at making the stockings more elastic, for better fit. Again, they have been treated to make them water-repellent. Then they don't spot so readily, and are easier to wash. These treated hose seem to resist snags and runs better.

But after all, what most women want to know about the new stockings is how they look. And the answer is "marvelous." There are evening stockings as fine as cobwebs, chiffon weights for dress wear, plain and rib knit styles for business and



sports, service weights to go with heavy shoes for gardening or housework, sturdy bright-colored campus socks for college girls. The first cotton hose tried out in actual wear were plain lightweight white lisle for nurses and others who work in white uniforms.

But the new designs go right along with the latest fashions for colored stockings to match costumes or accessories. When these designs become available on the retail counter, you may choose bright green, or peach, or garnet red to match your outfit. Or if you want to be dressed in your country's colors, you can wear red, blue, or white, to complete your costume,-- or even a blended red-white-and-blue tweed stocking to emphasize your patriotism.

Even those who are more conservative and prefer to stick to beige and tan in their hose, or revert to plain black or white, can still satisfy their stocking needs in some of the new designs. And after all, what could be more appropriate than to wear stockings made of our own home-grown cotton? The experimental stockings were originally made as a step in solving the problem of our cotton surplus. That problem is still with us, and even if we don't buy quite a pair a month apiece the country over- if cotton hose are more durable than silk- we can still do quite a bit toward absorbing some of that cotton surplus. At the same time, fortunately, the new types of hose are so attractive most of us will enjoy wearing them.

